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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1324
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RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1328
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0085
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0589
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0954
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1382
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 3756
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1151
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NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ANOTHER NCA MARCH AND MORE BEATINGS ADDS TO
PRESSURE ON GOZ

REF: A. REF A: HARARE 1175

[1](#)B. REF B: HARARE 1162

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.4 b/d

[1](#)1. (SBU) Approximately 300 National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) members marched in downtown Harare on September 25, seeking to deliver a petition calling for a new constitution to Parliament. The police were initially caught unaware due to the high level of secrecy surrounding the planning. However, they responded quickly, violently breaking up the march. According to NCA spokesperson Madock Chivasa, many of the NCA activists, who were predominately women, were badly beaten. According to Chivasa, police told the marchers that instead of being arrested, they would simply receive a beating to minimize the publicity. Sources from USG-funded Amani Trust told us that over twenty of the activists sustained serious tissue injuries that required medical care.

[1](#)2. (C) Chivasa told us the march was a continuation of last week's nationwide demonstrations (ref B). He said the NCA plans to conduct regular marches) "daily, if possible" - in an effort to maintain the pressure on the GOZ. The next march is planned for September 27. Setting the stage for a potentially larger confrontation, we have noticed a significant increase in the presence of police in riot gear and plain-clothed police in downtown Harare in recent days.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In a related development, President Mugabe addressed a crowd of supporters September 25 at the airport on his return from the UNGA and felt compelled to once more defend the actions of the police. Mugabe told the crowd that the ZCTU demonstrators and others who "resist police orders" were inviting a violent response and he blasted the U.S. and the EU for their criticisms of GOZ tactics, saying Zimbabwe had "no apologies to make." Mugabe also claimed that the

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) had come to Zimbabwe as "agents of imperialism" to destabilize the regime (ref A).

Comment

¶4. (C) The regime's blatant brutality in response to peaceful protests appears to have failed in its intended effect. Instead of frightening the opposition into submission, it is increasingly being seen by the opposition as a sign of the government's weakness and desperation. The NCA and the rest of the opposition may be on to a winning strategy, as regular marches not only further strain the GOZ's resources but also build confidence among opposition supporters. We need to do our part by continuing to marshal international opinion against the regime and by expressing our support for Zimbabweans' right to meet and assemble. That the international attention is having an effect is evidenced by Mugabe's increasingly strident efforts to publicly defend and justify GOZ repression, in the process further undermining his support among once sympathetic audiences such as the CBTU and elements of the EU. As against that, however, the GOZ seems to be effectively stifling public news concerning the NCA march, suggesting it is wising up to the harm it has done itself in crowing about the ZCTU beatings.

DELL